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ABSTRACT

This guide, which includes both English and Spanish versions, discusses parent involvement policies, which explain how the school district or the school itself supports the important role of parents in the education of their children. Every school district that receives money from Title I of the Improving America's Schools Act, the federal aid program for educationally disadvantaged students, must have a parent involvement policy, as must every school that receives Title I funds. The policy will cover a wide range of issues related to parent involvement, including parental rights and responsibilities and communication with parents. The school must hold an annual meeting to describe Title I to parents and it must provide up-to-date information about what it is doing with Title I funds and its parent involvement activities. Parents should find out about the school's policy and make sure that they understand it. Since every parent involvement policy is different, parents should determine how it is being developed and interpreted, and how the school uses the parent involvement policy. Questions should be referred to local educators or to school district coordinators and administrators. An attachment contains sections from Title I that relate to parent involvement policies. (SLD)

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Parents ask about
parent involvement policies

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICIES: A REQUIREMENT OF TITLE I, IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT OF 1994

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Parents ask about

parent involvement policies

What is a parent involvement policy?

For more on Title I, read the brochure *Parents Ask About Title I*

A parent involvement policy explains how the school district or the school itself supports the important role of parents in the education of their children. Every school district that receives Title I money must have a parent involvement policy. So must every school in the district that receives Title I money. (Title I is a Federal aid program that provides extra educational services for children who are behind in school.)

How does a parent involvement policy explain how schools and parents will work together?

The policy will cover a wide range of issues, such as:

- ❑ What the school staff will do to support parent involvement
- ❑ Parents' rights and responsibilities
- ❑ How school staff will communicate with parents
- ❑ The school procedure for complaints and other concerns

The policy may spell out general goals for parent involvement, such as:

> All schools in the district will have a plan for providing ongoing information to parents about how their children are educated.

And, the policy may include specific directions on what school staff and parents should do, such as:

> Teachers must hold annual parent-teacher conferences during the school year.

What will be in my district's parent involvement policy?

For more information on standards, read the brochure *Parents Ask About Standards*

The district policy describes the district-wide plan for involving parents in their children's education and in the Title I program. It describes how all schools and *parents in the district* will work together to help Title I students achieve the district's *standards of learning.* (Standards describe what students should be able to know and do at each grade level.)

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These are the topics that must be included in your district's policy:

- ❑ How parents will be involved in determining what the school needs to do to help their children achieve the standards
- ❑ How parents will be involved in developing the Title I plan at their school
- ❑ How the district will help its Title I schools involve parents
- ❑ How the district will coordinate the parent involvement activities of Title I and other programs such as Head Start and Even Start
- ❑ The district's plan for reviewing and evaluating its policy each year

What will be in my school's parent involvement policy?

Your school is required by Title I to involve parents in several specific ways.

For more information on compacts and profiles, read the brochures *Parents Ask About Compacts* and *Parents Ask About School Profiles*

The policy must describe the school's plans for:

- ❑ An annual meeting for parents to describe Title I
- ❑ Other parent meetings
- ❑ Giving parents up-to-date information about their children in an easy-to-understand form
- ❑ Coordinating the parent involvement activities of Title I and other programs in the school

In addition, the policy must include a *compact*, which is a written agreement of what schools and parents are each supposed to do to help students achieve.

Finally, the policy must describe the school's plans for developing a school *profile*, which is like a report card on your school.

How is the parent involvement policy developed?

The process that is used to develop the policy and put it into action will vary from district to district and from school to school. However, each district and each school is required to involve parents in the process. They also are required to give a copy of the policy to the parents of every child in Title I.

How will the parent involvement policy be put into practice?

Schools are allowed to use Title I money to support parent involvement.

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For example, they can use some of their Title I funds for workshops that inform parents about what their children are learning, or to buy materials that parents can use to help their children with schoolwork. Title I funds also can be used to provide child care or transportation for parents to attend school functions.

School districts that receive more than $500,000 from Title I must use at least 1 percent of the money to support parent involvement. (For $500,000, that would be at least $5,000.)

How can I make sure that my school's parent involvement policy is working?

Make sure you get a copy of your district's parent involvement policy and a copy of your school's policy. If you can't understand them, have someone from the school staff explain them to you.

Ask as many questions as you need to find out whether your district and school are doing what the policies say they will do to involve parents.

If the parent involvement policy has not yet been created, you can give your opinion to school staff on what should be in it. You may want to join the team that will write the policy. If the policy has been created, you can give your opinion on how it can be improved. Districts and schools must review their parent involvement policies every year. You may want to join the committee that reviews and updates them.

What else do I need to know?

Every parent involvement policy is different. Here are some questions you might want to ask to learn more about your district's and your school's policies:

Ask about developing the parent involvement policies

Do my district and school have parent involvement policies? If not, when will they be available?

Who's in charge of developing the policy for our district and our school?

What is the process for developing the policies?

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How are parents involved?

What part can I play in developing the parent involvement policy?

Ask about interpreting the policies

How do I get copies of the district and school parent involvement policies?

What do the policies say that the school will do for me and for other parents?

What do the policies expect me and other parents to do?

How do the policies protect my rights as a parent?

How do our policies compare to ones in other districts and schools?

If I don't agree with the policies, what can I do?

Ask about how your school uses the policies

What happens if school staff or parents do not follow the policies?

How is Title I money being used to support parent involvement?

Is other money available to support parent involvement?

Do the district and school review policies every year, as they are required to do?

Who can answer these questions?

Your child's teacher can answer many of them. Or you can ask:

- ❑ The school principal
- ❑ The Title I director in the school
- ❑ The superintendent of schools
- ❑ Members of the school board
- ❑ Members of the parent-teacher organization
- ❑ The parent coordinator
- ❑ Staff members at the parent resource center
- ❑ Other parents

Other brochures in this series available from your school

Parents Ask About Title I
Parents Ask About Standards
Parents Ask About Compacts
Parents Ask About School Profiles

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The following sections from "IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT of1994" that relate to parent involvement policies.

Title I: Amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965

"Sec. 1118. Parental Involvement.

"(a) Local Educational Agency Policy .-

"(1) In general .-A local educational agency may receive funds under this part only if such agency implements programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents in programs assisted under this part consistent with the provisions of this section. Such activities shall be planned and implemented with **meaningful consultation with parents of participating children.**

"(2) Written policy .-Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall **develop jointly with, agree upon with, and distribute to, parents of participating children** a written parent involvement policy that is incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establishes the **expectations for parent involvement**, and describes **how the local educational agency** will-

"(A) involve parents in the **joint development of the plan** under section 1112, and the **process of school review and improvement** under section 1116;

"(B) provide the **coordination, technical assistance, and other support** necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement;

"(C) build the **schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement** as described in subsection (e);

"(D) coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement **strategies under other programs**, such as Head Start, Even Start, the Parents as Teachers Program, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs;

"(E) conduct, with the involvement of parents, an **annual evaluation** of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy developed under this section-

"(i) to determine the effectiveness of the policy in **increasing the participation of parents**; and

"(ii) to identify **barriers to greater participation by parents** in activities authorized by this section, giving **particular attention to parents** who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background; and

"(F) **use the findings of the evaluations** described in subparagraph (E)in designing strategies for school improvement and revising, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this subsection and subsection (b)(1).

"(3) Reservation .-(A) Each local educational agency shall **reserve not less than 1 percent of such agency's allocation** under this part to carry out this section, including family literacy and parenting skills, except that this paragraph shall not apply if 1 percent of such agency's allocation under this part (other than funds allocated under section 1002(e) for the fiscal year for which the determination is made is $5,000 or less.

"(B) Parents of children receiving services under this part shall be **involved in the decisions regarding how funds** reserved under subparagraph (A) are allotted for parental involvement activities.

"(b) School Parental Involvement Policy .-

"(1) In general .-**Each school** served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed upon by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements of subsections (c) through (f). Such policy shall be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

"(2) Special rule .-If the school has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such school may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

"(3) Amendment .-If the local educational agency has a school district-level parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such agency may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

"(4) Parental comments .-If the plan under section 1112 is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the local educational agency shall submit any parent comments with such plan when such local educational agency submits the plan to the State.

"(c) Policy Involvement .

-Each school served under this part shall-

"(1) **convene an annual meeting**, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain this part, its requirements, and their right to be involved;

"(2) **offer a flexible number of meetings**, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, **with funds** provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;

"(3) **involve parents**, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children;

"(4) provide **parents of participating children**-

"(A) **timely information** about programs under this part;

"(B) **school performance profiles** required under section 1116(a)(3) and their child's individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of such results, as required under section1111(b)(3)(H);

"(C) a **description and explanation** of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;

"(D) opportunities for regular meetings to **formulate suggestions**, share experiences with other parents, and participate as appropriate in **decisions** relating to the education of their children if such parents so desire; and

"(E) **timely responses** to parents' suggestions under subparagraph (D); and

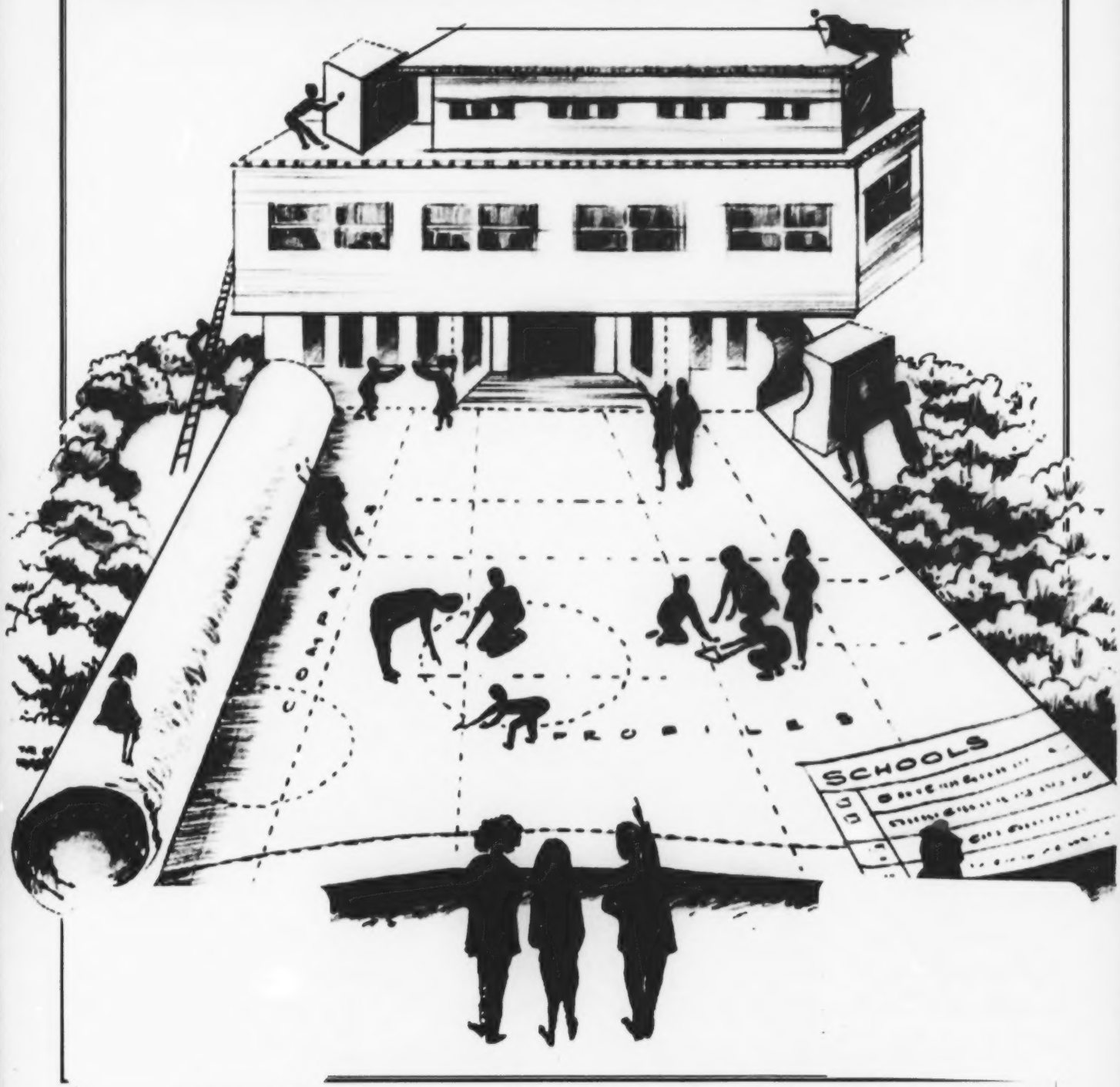
"(5) if the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

"(d) Shared Responsibilities for High Student Performance .-

As a component of the **school-level parental involvement policy** developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a **school-parent compact** that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards."

Los padres preguntan acerca del plan de acción para la

participación de los padres



PLAN DE ACCIÓN PARA LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS PADRES (PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICIES):
ES UN REQUISITO DEL PROGRAMA TÍTULO I DEL DECRETO DE 1994, "MEJORANDO LAS ESCUELAS DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS" (IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT).

Los padres preguntan acerca del plan de acción para la participación de los padres

¿Qué es el plan de acción para la participación de los padres?

Para mayor información sobre el Título I, lea el folleto *Los padres preguntan acerca del Título I*

El plan de acción para la participación de los padres explica la manera en que los distritos escolares o las escuelas mismas apoyan el papel tan importante que los padres tienen en la educación de sus hijos. Todos los distritos escolares que reciben dinero del Título I deben tener un plan de acción para la participación de los padres. Las escuelas del distrito que reciben dinero del Título I también deben tener este plan de acción. (El Título I es un programa federal de ayuda para proveer servicios educativos adicionales a los niños que están atrasados en la escuela).

¿Cómo explica el plan de acción la manera en que la escuela y los padres deben trabajar juntos?

El plan de acción comprende una gran variedad de temas, como por ejemplo:

- ❑ Lo que debe hacer el personal escolar para apoyar la participación de los padres
- ❑ Los derechos y responsabilidades de los padres
- ❑ La forma en que el personal de la escuela se debe comunicar con los padres
- ❑ El procedimiento que sigue la escuela para recibir quejas e inquietudes

El plan de acción debe especificar los objetivos generales de la participación de los padres, por ejemplo:

> Todas las escuelas del distrito escolar deben tener un plan para mantener informados a los padres acerca de la manera en que están educando a sus hijos.

Además, el plan de acción puede incluir instrucciones específicas sobre lo que el personal escolar y los padres deben hacer, por ejemplo:

> Los maestros deben hacer por lo menos una reunión durante el año escolar con los padres de cada niño.

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¿Cuál debe ser el contenido del plan de acción para la participación de los padres en mi distrito?

Para mayor información sobre los estándares lea el folleto *Los padres preguntan acerca de los estándares*

El plan de acción del distrito describe lo que todo el distrito escolar debe hacer para la participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos y en el programa del Título I. El plan describe la forma en que todas las escuelas y los padres del distrito van a cooperar para ayudar a los estudiantes del Título I a alcanzar los *estándares* de aprendizaje del distrito. (Los estándares describen lo que los estudiantes deben saber y ser capaces de hacer en cada nivel escolar).

La siguiente es una lista de los temas que se deben incluir en el plan de acción de su distrito:

- ❑ La manera en que los padres deben participar en la toma de decisiones sobre lo que las escuelas necesitan hacer para ayudar a los niños a alcanzar los estándares
- ❑ La manera en que los padres deben participar en el desarrollo del plan para el Título I en su escuela
- ❑ La forma en que el distrito escolar debe ayudar a las escuelas que tienen Título I para integrar a los padres
- ❑ La forma en que el distrito debe coordinar la participación de los padres del Título I con otros programas como "Head Start" y "Even Start"
- ❑ El plan del distrito para revisar y evaluar anualmente el plan de acción

¿Cómo debe ser el plan de acción para la participación de los padres de mi escuela?

El Título I requiere que su escuela tenga diferentes actividades específicas para la participación de los padres. El plan de acción debe describir los planes de la escuela para:

Para mayor información sobre los pactos y el perfil de la escuela, lea los folletos *Los padres preguntan acerca de los pactos* y *Los padres preguntan acerca del perfil escolar*

- ❑ Llevar a cabo una reunión anual de padres para explicar el Título I
- ❑ Tener otras reuniones de padres
- ❑ Dar a los padres información actual sobre sus niños de una manera fácil de entender
- ❑ Coordinar las actividades de participación de los padres del Título I con otros programas en la escuela

Además, el plan de acción debe incluir un pacto *(compact)*,

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el cual consiste en una declaración escrita de lo que las escuelas y los padres deben hacer para ayudar a los estudiantes a tener éxito en la escuela.

Finalmente, el plan de acción debe explicar el plan de la escuela para diseñar el *perfil escolar (school profile)* el cual es como una libreta de calificaciones de la escuela.

¿Cómo se diseña el plan de acción para la participación de los padres?

El proceso para diseñar y aplicar el plan de acción es diferente en cada distrito y en cada escuela. Sin embargo, todos los distritos y escuelas tienen la obligación de incluir a los padres en este proceso. También tienen la obligación de dar una copia del plan de acción a los padres que tienen hijos en el Título I.

¿De qué manera se debe aplicar el plan de acción para la participación de los padres?

A las escuelas se les permite utilizar los fondos del Título I para apoyar la participación de los padres. Por ejemplo, las escuelas pueden usar parte del dinero del Título I para ofrecer talleres que informen a los padres acerca de lo que sus hijos están aprendiendo o para comprar materiales que los padres pueden usar para ayudar a sus hijos con las tareas. Los fondos del Título I también se pueden usar para el cuidado de niños o transporte para que los padres puedan asistir a las actividades de la escuela.

Los distritos escolares que reciben más de $500,000 dólares del Título I deben gastar por lo menos el 1 por ciento del dinero para la participación de los padres. (Si recibe $500,000, por lo menos serían $5,000 dólares).

¿Cómo puedo saber si el plan de acción para la participación de los padres está funcionando bien?

Ante todo, obtenga una copia de los planes de acción de su distrito y de su escuela. Si los encuentra difíciles de entender, pídale a algún empleado de la escuela que se los explique.

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Haga tantas preguntas como sea necesario para averiguar si su distrito y su escuela están haciendo lo que el plan de acción dice que deben hacer para promover la participación de los padres.

Si el plan de acción para la participación de los padres no ha sido diseñado, usted puede decir al personal escolar lo que se debería incluir. Los distritos y las escuelas deben revisar sus planes de acción todos los años. Usted puede participar en el comité que los revisa y los actualiza.

¿Qué más necesito saber?

Todos los planes de acción para la participación de los padres son diferentes. A continuación hay unas preguntas que puede usar para aprender un poco más sobre los planes de acción de su distrito y de su escuela:

Pregunte acerca del diseño del plan de acción para la participación de los padres

¿Tienen el distrito y la escuela un plan de acción para la participación de los padres? Si no es así, ¿Cuándo estará disponible?

¿Quién está encargado de diseñar el plan de acción para nuestro distrito y nuestra escuela?

¿Cuál es el proceso para diseñar el plan de acción?

¿De qué manera participan los padres?

¿Qué papel puedo desempeñar en el diseño del plan de acción para la participación de los padres?

Pregunte sobre el significado del plan de acción

¿Cómo puedo obtener una copia del plan de acción para la participación de los padres del distrito y de la escuela?

¿Qué dice el plan de acción que la escuela debe hacer por mí y por otros padres?

¿Qué espera el plan de acción de mí y de otros padres?

¿De qué manera protege el plan de acción mis derechos de padre de familia?

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¿Cómo es nuestro plan de acción en comparación con los de otros distritos y escuelas?

Si no estoy de acuerdo con el plan de acción, ¿qué puedo hacer?

Pregunte sobre la forma en que la escuela utiliza el plan de acción

¿Qué pasa si el personal escolar o los padres no cumplen con el plan de acción?

¿Cómo se está usando el dinero del Título I para apoyar la participación de los padres?

¿Hay otro dinero disponible para apoyar la participación de los padres?

¿La escuela y el distrito revisan el plan de acción todos los años, así como se les exige?

¿Quién puede contestarme estas preguntas?

El maestro de su hijo puede contestar muchas de ellas. O también le puede preguntar:

- ❑ Al director de la escuela
- ❑ Al director del Título I de la escuela
- ❑ Al superintendente de las escuelas
- ❑ A los miembros de la junta escolar
- ❑ A los miembros de la organización padres-maestros
- ❑ Al coordinador de los padres
- ❑ A los miembros del centro de recursos para padres
- ❑ A otros padres

Otros folletos en esta serie disponibles en su escuela

Los padres preguntan acerca del Título I

Los padres preguntan acerca de los estándares

Los padres preguntan acerca de los pactos

Los padres preguntan acerca del perfil escolar

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The following sections from "IMPROVING AMERICA'S SCHOOLS ACT of1994" that relate to parent involvement policies.

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"(2) Written policy .-Each local educational agency that receives funds under this part shall **develop jointly with, agree upon with, and distribute to, parents of participating children** a written parent involvement policy that is incorporated into the local educational agency's plan developed under section 1112, establishes the **expectations for parent involvement**, and describes **how the local educational agency** will-

"(A) involve parents in the **joint development of the plan** under section 1112, and the **process of school review and improvement** under section 1116;

"(B) provide the **coordination, technical assistance, and other support** necessary to assist participating schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement;

"(C) build the **schools' and parents' capacity for strong parent involvement** as described in subsection (e);

"(D) coordinate and integrate parental involvement strategies under this part with parental involvement **strategies under other programs**, such as Head Start, Even Start, the Parents as Teachers Program, the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters, and State-run preschool programs;

"(E) conduct, with the involvement of parents, an **annual evaluation** of the content and effectiveness of the parental involvement policy developed under this section-

"(i) to determine the effectiveness of the policy in **increasing the participation of parents**; and

"(ii) to identify **barriers to greater participation by parents** in activities authorized by this section, giving **particular attention to parents** who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background; and

"(F) **use the findings of the evaluations** described in subparagraph (E)in designing strategies for school improvement and revising, if necessary, the parental involvement policies described in this subsection and subsection (b)(1).

"(3) Reservation .-(A) Each local educational agency shall **reserve not less than 1 percent of such agency's allocation** under this part to carry out this section, including family literacy and parenting skills, except that this paragraph shall not apply if 1 percent of such agency's allocation under this part (other than funds allocated under section 1002(e) for the fiscal year for which the determination is made is $5,000 or less.

"(B) Parents of children receiving services under this part shall be **involved in the decisions regarding how funds** reserved under subparagraph (A) are allotted for parental involvement activities.

"(b) School Parental Involvement Policy .-

"(1) In general .-**Each school** served under this part shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed upon by such parents, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements of subsections (c) through (f). Such policy shall be updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school.

"(2) Special rule .-If the school has a parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such school may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

"(3) Amendment .-If the local educational agency has a school district-level parental involvement policy that applies to all parents, such agency may amend that policy, if necessary, to meet the requirements of this subsection.

"(4) Parental comments .-If the plan under section 1112 is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, the local educational agency shall submit any parent comments with such plan when such local educational agency submits the plan to the State.

"(c) Policy Involvement .

-Each school served under this part shall-

"(1) **convene an annual meeting**, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under this part and to explain this part, its requirements, and their right to be involved;

"(2) **offer a flexible number of meetings**, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, **with funds** provided under this part, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement;

"(3) **involve parents**, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under this part, including the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children;

"(4) provide **parents of participating children**-

"(A) **timely information** about programs under this part;

"(B) **school performance profiles** required under section 1116(a)(3) and their child's individual student assessment results, including an interpretation of such results, as required under section1111(b)(3)(H);

"(C) a **description and explanation** of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet;

"(D) opportunities for regular meetings to **formulate suggestions**, share experiences with other parents, and participate as appropriate in **decisions** relating to the education of their children if such parents so desire; and

"(E) **timely responses** to parents' suggestions under subparagraph (D); and

"(5) if the schoolwide program plan under section 1114(b)(2) is not satisfactory to the parents of participating children, submit any parent comments on the plan when the school makes the plan available to the local educational agency.

"(d) Shared Responsibilities for High Student Performance .-

As a component of the **school-level parental involvement policy** developed under subsection (b), each school served under this part shall jointly develop with parents for all children served under this part a **school-parent compact** that outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement and the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the State's high standards."